
From: Onkar Bindra <osbindra@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 4:47 PM
To: Tom Adams
Cc: Kenneth McDonald; Tom Torlakson; SBE World
Subject: Religions Course

Revision of Curriculum Framework for History-Social Science

Dear Dr. Tom Adams,

Respectful Greetings!

This is in continuation of my previous e-mails for favor of consideration by you, the SMC and the IQC. So please forward it to all concerned. Thanks.

I had plans to provide to you on Monday, Feb. 9, morning the "course outline and pacing" for the course received from Thorsten W. Harrison, Senior Director of Modesto City Schools, in March 2014. But, I could not do that. I do not have its electronic version. So I am sending a hard copy separately for distribution to the members of SMC and the IQC. I will appreciate your confirming receipt.

Survey of World Religions, a grade-9 Elective in the History-Social Science Curriculum Framework since 1987, is not a popular course. In fact, very few high schools offer it and very few students take it.

On the other hand, the "**World Geography-World Religions**" of **Modesto City Schools District** started in 1999, and required for graduation, is popular and has proved useful in increasing tolerance and reducing bullying. ACR 154 (Gray, 2014) has applauded the effort of the Modesto City School District.

This course was developed by a 115-member Community Safe Schools Committee of Modesto, meeting over 14 months. It was approved in 1998, and has been offered since 1999. Teachers are given guidelines for teaching world religions and the course has been promoting respect for religious freedom and diversity.

The students learn character traits of courage, honesty, loyalty, respect, responsibility, civility, compassion, initiative and perseverance. They read History of the Constitution, Time Line of USA, common grounds, listening with care, and tips for effective communication. They are taught how to make comments without hurting feelings of others. The class examines the geographic location, history, culture, and major beliefs of six religions: Unit I: Introduction -1-2 week; Unit II: Eastern Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism -1 week each; and Unit III: Western Religions -Judaism, Christianity and Islam - 1 week each.

The class has been very successful in helping Sikh pupils feel more accepted. The students become informed about the religious diversity in their community and the world and obtain greater understanding about the six major world religions.

RESOURCES NEEDED: Each teacher of this course is given one copy of each of the following : World Religions -Gabriel Arquilevich -Teacher Created Materials (Latest edition); The Usborne Encyclopedia of World Religions; Cambridge Educational Videos on Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Sikhism.

REQUEST. In view of the Modesto experience and recommendations of our legislature, in the ACR 154 (Gray 2014), I request that the Modesto model be considered by the History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee, the Instructions Quality Commission and the State Board of Education, as a replacement for the grad-9 elective, "Survey of World Religions". **So please share with all concerned, this e-mail and the current course outline and pacing of the Modesto course.**

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Onkar S. Bindra

(916) 858-2650; osbindra@sbcglobal.net